



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**K.E. White Graduate and Education Center**  
**September 10, 2024**  
**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Stephanie Johnson called the September 10, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION**

**OATH OF OFFICE**

Chair Johnson called upon the Honorable Judge JC Cole to administer the Oath of Office to Kayla Dixon, the new SGA President who will hold a seat on the Board.

**ROLL CALL**

Trustee Kathryn Holding conducted roll call. Trustees present included James Copland, Kayla Dixon, Christine Evans, (via Zoom), Stephen Friedrich (via Zoom), Kathryn Holding, Dr. Stephanie Johnson, Dr. Tiffany Jones (via Zoom), Patricia Norman, Johnny Tillett, Paul Tine, and Justin Waddell.

**REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR**

Chair Johnson expressed that this will be her last year as Chair of the Board after being Chair for 8 years, however she wanted to express her gratitude of appreciation to Felicia Melton, Aileen Whidbee and Melanie Baker for assisting with keeping the meeting on task in addition to thanking Atty. Regina Rudisill for ensuring the meeting stayed on schedule. She also thanked the Vice Chancellors for all the hard work they have put forth, so the university continues to operate during the transition of Interim Chancellor Edmonds. Lastly, Chair Johnson thanked Interim Chancellor Edmonds for her leadership and welcomed the new board member.

**STATE GOVERNMENT ETHICS ACT**

Chair Stephanie Johnson read the State Government Ethics Act. No one mentioned a conflict of interest based on the materials received.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made and seconded (Waddell/Copland) to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2024, Board meeting. Motion passed.

## **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion was made and seconded (Tine/Norman) to approve the consent agenda which included the Approval Infrastructure Phase 3 Designer (RMF Engineering), Approval of Infrastructure Phase 3 Construction Manager (Balfour Beatty Construction), Approval of Chancellor's Residence Design-Builder (Balfour Beatty Construction/Mosley Architecture), Approval to demolish existing Chancellor's Residence, Approval of Flight School Commissioning Agent (AEI Engineering) and Approval of the revisions to Policy 100.1 Bylaws of the Board of Trustees. Motion passed unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND STRATEGIC GROWTH**

Dr. Farrah Ward welcomed 13 new staff members across various departments. Notably, we added key positions in Enrollment Management, including a Director of Transfer Admissions, as well as new staff in the Registrar's office and Financial Aid. After the retirement of our longtime Title III Coordinator, we have also filled that important role.

In addition to our staff hires, we welcomed 13 new faculty members. Among them, we recruited two history professors to support the upcoming American Democracy requirement, which will take effect in Fall 2025. We also added faculty for our second online degree program in Homeland Security and a new faculty member for our Health and Wellness Promotion online degree program, which was approved last year and launched this fall.

Moreover, we are excited to announce our first full-time hire for the Sustainability Studies program, a growing area of interest. Lastly, we have filled two endowed professorships: one in Engineering Technology and another in Mathematics, with the latter beginning in January.

### **Update on Performance Metrics:**

Performance metrics, which are aligned with the chancellor's incentive discussions, are crucial for our evaluation. When I presented these metrics in June, we discussed five core metrics plus one institutional metric. These metrics were weighted to represent 100% of the performance-based funding model and 50% of the chancellor's incentive compensation.

ECSU was informed by the system office of a new performance metric for the second period, which started in the 2023-24 academic year. The new metric is the average credit earned per year. As a result, we now have six core metrics, plus institutional metric.

To clarify, the average credits earned per year measure the number of credits that full-time students earn in an academic year. The goal is for students to earn 30 credits annually—15 credits each semester—to complete a 120-credit program within four years. Currently, our baseline from the 2022-23 academic year is an average of 24.83 credits per student. The target is to increase this to 25.17 credits by FY26.

In response to this new metric, the Deans and I, along with the chairs, have already met to strategize ways to improve student credit accumulation. We are launching the "15 to Finish" campaign, which we had previously used with success, to help ensure that students stay on track and complete their credit requirements.

### **Policy on Academic Program Planning:**

The Chancellors are explicitly responsible for regularly reviewing their institutions' academic programs. They are tasked with the authority to expand, contract, or discontinue any programs based on these reviews. According to the new policy, Chancellors must conduct a comprehensive review of all academic programs every seven years.

This policy introduces a novel approach to program management. For the first time, universities such as UNC Asheville and UNC Greensboro have opted to contract programs. While this does not entail eliminating these programs entirely, it involves reducing the allocation of funds to them. This shift represents a significant change and reflects a broader trend of institutions adapting to changing enrollment patterns and financial constraints.

The purpose of this policy is to proactively address these challenges by ensuring that each institution thoroughly evaluates all academic programs every seven years. This evaluation must include assessments of current and projected student demand, workforce needs, and student outcomes, including retention and graduation rates.

### **Enrollment:**

This year, our enrollment reached 2,261, marking a 4.4% increase. Given the broader trend of declining enrollment across many colleges and universities, this is a notable achievement. While the national average last year saw only about a 1% increase in enrollment, our 4.4% growth is a testament to the dedicated efforts of our faculty and staff. I am incredibly proud of what we've accomplished together.

### **2024-2025 Strategic Plan Goals:**

As part of our future strategic plan, we aim to reach an enrollment of 2,300 by Fall 2025. Historically, we have consistently surpassed our institutional goals each year. For instance, while the official goal for this year was 2,213, I informed the faculty and staff that the target was 2,283. This higher target inspired them to exceed expectations, resulting in an enrollment of 2,261, the highest we've seen since 2013.

Of note is the significant increase in our freshman class. Despite overall enrollment rising over the past seven years, our freshman numbers had been declining from 2019 to 2021. This trend was due to our strong retention rates; continuing students were returning each year, which influenced the freshman class size. The recent growth in freshman enrollment is a promising development and reflects the effectiveness of our strategic efforts.

### **COMMITTEE ON STUDENT EXCELLENCE**

*Trustee Johnny Tillet reported:*

**Dr. Kevin Wade** provided updates on New Hires, unit updates, Community of Care, Career Development Center, Living Learning, Move-In and Ribbon Cutting; Resource development and What's to Come.

**Community of Care;** Student Health Services, Counseling, Viking Cares Food Pantry and CARE support. NC STeP Updates, 5-year grant, December 2027; 83 follow-ups and check-ins for the Summer 2024; **Career Development Center;** High profile summer highlights included, Under Armour HBCU Career Combined; Thurgood Marshall Foundation Honda Immersion Program and the State Employee Credit Union Internship Summer Internship Luncheon where 20 ECSU

students were honored. The 2024 Fall Career Fair was held on September 24, 2024, and the Graduate School Fair, held on September 26, 2024. Living Learning – Fall Move-in; 1046 student housing, 20 males in Hampton Inn and 31 females at Mid Atlantic Christian University. Ribbon Cutting took place for University Towers on August 12 and the Commuter Center & Bowling Alley, August 22, 2024. Resource Development – Lumina Foundation Phase 1: \$175K and Phase 2: \$125K; to advance Adult Learner Initiatives. Dr. Wade shared an update on the HBCU Give Back “National Service Initiative” where seven HBCUs received \$32,500 in grants from ECSU to advance their national service activities on their perspective campuses. What’s Next: Fall scheduled for the Community Connections series in addition to a teaser for the 2024 Homecoming.

**Trustee Tillett** ask how many new hires were new positions; SA is working with HR to offer incentives, stipends more specifically for Community Director positions through Housing and Residence Life to attract and retain good talent. **Trustee Johnson and Norman** thanked Dr. Wade for his vision and the homecoming teaser.

**AD James Dubose** presented the 2024-25 CIAA SAAC President & D2 National SAAC representative, Darius Satterfield; announced the upcoming Viking Downeast Classic, September 9, 2024 in Rocky Mount NC; introduced new staff within the division; AD shared the D2 athletics directors association information, 23 ECSU student athletes earn D2 ADA academic achievement awards; shared the enrollment impact: 290 student athletes, 91 transfer students, and 96 freshmen’s; he also shared the launch of the “We’ll take you there, athletics travel fund” fundraising strategy and the QR code and the \$500K fundraising goal.

**Trustee Tillett** – commented that (\$500K) is not realistic; we have to close the deficit; sports vetting fund does not cover that; we have a deficit (\$437K on buses); We need to be realistic; considering where we are, it’s going to be hard for this area; as a board, we give, this is a big ask; take a look at this again; every university there is going to be a deficit; 427, almost 100 are athletics; Comment: **Trustee Tine** changing our culture over time; large part is setting our goals high; if athletics is going to be our focus, setting our goals high is a reasonable approach; all schools are in a deficit, and other schools have strategic ways of raising money; it is a hot button issue, we should not allow it to persist. **Trustee Norman**; what is the current status of our own buses; why can we not use our own busses; to help us cut cost; **Chancellor Edmonds** indicated that we have 2 coach buses that are not operatable; we have to maintain those busses; looking at surplus of our busses; there are some things that AD can control and some things that he cannot control; 4-5 games per years; looking at 2-3 25 passengers busses; and we are currently working on this; other things currently impact the busses and discussions are underway.

**Kayla Dixon, President of SGA** presented on the Vision and Priorities of SGA, Fostering Community, Opportunities, Reviving Student Life, Building the ECSU Legacy, Elevate and Support. She shared the Association of Student Government Business Meetings; ECSU will host a virtual meeting February 21-22, 2025; shared the Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies in University Towers Residence Hall and the Bowling Alley; held a Student Leader Retreat (August 12-14, 2024); and the Week of Welcome on August 18-24, 2024.

## **COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Trustee Paul Tine reported the following:*

Interim Chief of Staff, Vice Chancellor for Operations William “Chip” Lewin mentioned the Economic Development Forum was held at the ECSU Welcome Center on July 17<sup>th</sup> during which

presentations were made on the Economic Impact Study, Construction updates and the Hotel Occupancy Study for the university. He informed the Board that NC is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest state by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), ECSU is amongst the top 5 largest employers in Pasquotank County, and Education Services and Healthcare are the largest industries in the county in terms of civilian employment. ECSU has an approximate \$127M total annual regional economic output and an approximate \$158.1M total annual state-wide economic output. He highlighted key opportunities for ECSU to continue to make its economic impact. Interim Chief of Staff Lewin presented a list of future projects that are included in the Master Plan. He advised the Hotel Occupancy Study was conducted by Hospitality Marketers International, Inc. and he provided additional information related to the possible hotel location, hotel concept, occupancy projections.

Interim Chief of Staff Lewin provided an update on the process for the University's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and briefly went over Goal 6, Objectives 6.1 through 6.3. He informed the Committee of ECSU's performance metrics for the partnerships created with regard to Objective 6.1. He gave updates on Objective 6.2, the university's Applied Research and Consulting as well as provided the amount of research funding received during FYs 2023, 2024 and 2025 (as of August 26, 2024). As it relates to Objective 6.3, Interim Chief of Staff Lewin informed the Committee of ECSU's partnerships with other entities by way of hosting the ECPPS Convocation, United Way Luncheon, Food Bank Town Hall, SECU Foundation 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, and Joint Veterans Day Ceremony.

## **COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, AUDIT AND UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT**

*Trustee James Copeland reported the following:*

### **Financial Update(s):**

Vice Chancellor Robert Thibeault informational items included the General Fund report which included expenditures and revenues as of June 30, 2024, the budget total was: \$58,338,389 with 100% of the budget spent. We didn't have to revert any funds back to the State. Detailed breakdown materials were submitted in the BOT booklet. Auxiliary and Trust Funds balance as of June 30, 2024: \$21.4M with \$15.5M unrestricted. An All-Funds Budget Report and Endowment Fund Update as of June 30, 2024, were provided within the Board Book materials.

### **University Advancement Update(s):**

Vice Chancellor Kevin Wade gave staff updates for University Advancement. VC Wade provided the fundraising totals for the Leadership Giving FY24: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024: ECSU Board of Trustees - \$183,354, with 100% given; ECSU Foundation Board - \$29,537,45 with 74% given; ECSU Board of Visitors - \$25,620 with 76% given and ECSU National Alumni Association - \$39,220 with 75% given. The Fundraising Total for June 31<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 was \$1,293,174.04. Closing out FY 24 and entering the FY25. As of August 30<sup>th</sup>, FY25 is exceeding the previous year.

VC Wade presented the Strategic Plan: Goals for FY25 and Fall Solicitation plans. Plans for Founders Day Scholarship Gala XVIII has begun with nominations being open until September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for the Chancellor's Legacy Awardees. Sponsorship and ad opportunities are available. The XVIII Annual Founders Day Scholarship Gala will be held on Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025. VC Wade gave updates on the DEVFC 2024, CIAA 2025 and Homecoming 2024 engagements. There will be approximately seven class reunions planned during Homecoming 2024. New giving initiatives were stated.

Upcoming events are: Down East Classic Football game – Rocky Mount, Sports Arena – Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and ECSU Homecoming – celebrating Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

VC Wade congratulated Letisha Evans, Director of Annual Giving and Johnyelle Lee, Director of Advancement Services for taking the lead in the receipt of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz 2024 Giving Day Award. ECSU won the FNL 2024 Day of Giving Award in the HBCU category for its innovative use of the Scale Funder online giving platform. The fundraiser was a success. They exceeded their \$150,000 goal. They raised \$167,000 with over 400 donors.

## **COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE**

*Chair Stephanie Johnson reported the following:*

### **Board Officer(s) Election Update:**

Chair Johnson and Trustee Copland provided an update on the nominations for the offices of Board Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.

### **Action Item:**

Interim General Counsel Regina Rudisill requested the proposed amendments to ECSU's Policy 100.1 Bylaws of the Board of Trustees, Article VIII, Section 2 (correction to a hyperlink) and Section 4 (Vacancy in the Chancellorship) be approved to be in alignment with UNC Policy 200.8. A motion to approve the amendment was made by Trustee Tine and seconded by Trustee Copland. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Informational Update:**

Interim Chief of Staff, Vice Chancellor for Operations William Lewin advised the HR updates were provided in the meeting materials and that he had no informational update on Governance.

## **CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

Interim Chancellor Catherine Edmonds provided the following updates to the Board:

- An overview of the Continued Enrollment Growth
  - Increase of Fall 2024 Freshman and Transfer Students as well as the Freshman Pinning Ceremony
- The 48% increase of the Aviation student enrollment
- Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies of renovated campus spaces
  - University Towers
    - Attended by Board of Trustee members, campus administrators and staff
  - Commuter Center
    - Attended by Board of Trustees members, campus administrators and staff
  - Williams Hall
    - Newly renovated classrooms, labs, and student lounge areas
- This is How We Do It Faculty/Staff Welcome Back reception
- Highlights of the Move In Day and the incredible organization efforts of Dr. Ward and his staff
- Student WOW Wednesday in the cafeteria
- Annual Back to School Bash
  - Collaborative efforts of WRVS and community to give free haircuts and school supplies

- Faculty/Staff Fall Institute
- Employee Engagement Survey
  - ECSU has improved to second place in ranking
- National Alumni Association Meeting
  - Ensuring alumni will get updates regarding the improvements of the University
- Economic Impact Form
  - Impact study shows the economic growth to the areas
    - The forum was attended by Board of Trustee members as well as other stakeholders of the community
- Strategic Plan
  - Entering year 5 with 85% completion of objectives to build a strong foundation
- 2024 Washington Monthly Ranking
  - ECSU's new ranking of being #4 of the Top 200 Bachelor's Colleges and #12 for the Best Bang for your Buck in the Southeast Region
- **Accountability Commitment and Excellence – ACE**
  - Ensuring ECSU provides quality education and a great place to live and learn

## **COMMITTEE ON OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

### **Infrastructure Updates:**

*Trustee Justin Waddell reported:*

William Lewin, Interim Chief of Staff/VC for Operations provided the updates for his area. He introduced the new team members for within the Chancellor's Office: Kimbly Cooper – Executive Assistant to the Chancellor and Robert Boone – Special Assistant to the Chancellor.

VC Lewin presented the Facility Upgrades, which included: HVAC Controls upgrades for University Towers, Williams Hall and the Jenkins Science Center; HVAC Central Utility Plant upgrades for the Sand Filtration System, G. R. Little Library and the Welcome Center – New Chiller. Four buildings had roof work done – Moore Hall, Williams Hall, Thomas-Jenkins and Fine Arts Center.

VC Lewin briefed the committee on the continue execution of the Master Plan. He gave a list of upcoming improvements such as demo of the Infirmary building, relocating Teachers Way, replacing the Radio Tower, adding a Roundabout and a new parking lot by the Thorpe Administration Building. The new residence hall which holds 352 beds is underway and will be opening Summer 2025. The new dining hall in under construction and will open the summer of 2025. It will have the capacity to seat 761. The Flight School construction is planned to start in February 2025, the Sky Bridge that will allow students to cross safely over Weeksville Road is on hold until additional funds are allocated. Phase 1 & 2 of the infrastructure upgrade will start this month, Phase 3 of the upgrade will start July 2025. Ryan Strickland, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Design & Construction presented the Action Items for construction approvals.

**Action Item(s)** – AVC Strickland presented the following Action Items:

- 1) Approval of Design Team – RMF Engineering Phase 3 Infrastructure Project
- 2) Approval of Construction Manager at Risk - Balfour Beatty Phase 3 Infrastructure Project
- 3) Approval of Design-Build Team for Chancellor's Residence
- 4) Approval to demolish existing Chancellor's Residence

After some discussion Trustee Tillett made the motion to approve the construction action items, the motion was seconded by Trustee Patricia Norman. The motion carried, unanimously.

**Information Technology Updates:**

Jamar Jones, Chief Information Officer, introduced his new Deputy CIO/CISO Lucine Frederic. CIO Jones gave an update on the outdoor campus-wide Wi-Fi installation that will be completed by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The Standardized AV Configuration will assist in seamless wireless connection. CIO Jones presented the Technical Refresh 5-Year Cycle. Regularly updating key elements of the IT infrastructure will maximize the system's performance.

**Communications And Marketing Updates:**

Dr. Shamika Lane, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief HR Officer presented the ECSU is for You Campaign-Targeted Phases. Dr. Lane gave the campaign goals, Value Proposition, targeted audiences, methods, programs and areas. Phase III will be introduced Spring 2025. You can support the campaign by following and liking ECSU on the social media channels.

There being no other business, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 1:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melanie M Baker*